



For Immediate Release

Contact: Craig Orfield
(202) 224-6770

Thursday, September 21, 2006

***ENZI ENDORSES CDC CALL FOR ROUTINE HIV TESTING; URGES
ACTION ON RYAN WHITE CARE BILL***

Washington, D.C. - U.S. Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY), Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee (HELP Committee), today endorsed the recommendation issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that all Americans between the ages of 13 and 64 be routinely tested for HIV/AIDS.

“Making an HIV test part of a routine physical exam is an important step toward improving treatment of HIV/AIDS patients and stopping the spread of the disease,” Enzi said. “By identifying HIV-positive individuals sooner, doctors can provide patients with better access to life-saving and life-extending care. Early detection will also encourage individuals who test positive to take the necessary steps to help stem the spread of HIV/AIDS.”

According to the CDC, an estimated 250,000 Americans are currently living with HIV/AIDS but do not even know it. Nearly half of these patients will not be tested until they become ill with HIV-related sickness.

In the past, the CDC only recommended that “high risk groups,” such as intravenous drug users and gay men, be tested regularly for HIV. However, in recent years, the face of the HIV/AIDS epidemic has changed drastically, leading the CDC to recommend that HIV tests become as commonplace as cholesterol tests for all Americans.

“More and more women, minorities, and people in Southern and rural areas are being infected with HIV/AIDS,” Enzi said. “This disease affects all Americans, and encouraging regular testing is important to erasing its stigma and providing better, earlier treatment and care.

“Congress must also do its part to improve HIV/AIDS treatment across racial, gender, and geographic lines. I am working now with members of both parties and in both Houses of Congress to reauthorize the Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resource

Emergency Act (CARE Act) to better target funding to meet the needs of the AIDS epidemic of today and tomorrow, not the epidemic of yesterday.”

On Wednesday, the House Energy and Commerce Committee approved a Ryan White CARE Act reauthorization bill that reflects months of careful bipartisan, bicameral negotiations.

“I encourage both the House and the Senate to act quickly on this important legislation so that we can send this bill to the President for his signature,” Enzi said.

####